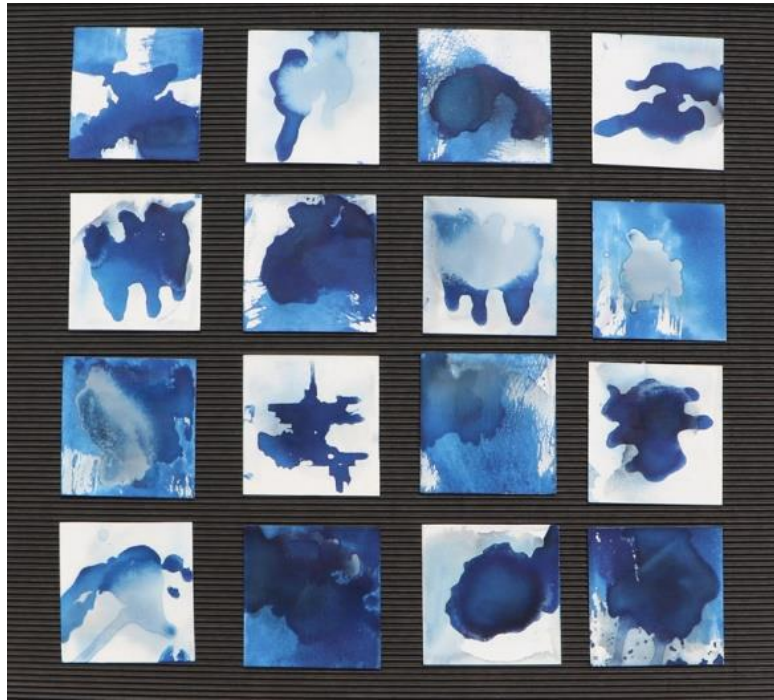


Lisa Shea / Artist's Statement



Cyanotypes are a parallel development with the traditional silver halide path of photography. The cyanotype's combination of light-reactive chemicals ammonium iron citrate and potassium ferricyanide were first discovered in 1842. Anna Atkins made the process famous by authoring books of seaweed images. To create a cyanotype one lays an object onto painted paper, lets the sun shine, and then rinses off the paper. One is left with a shadow imprint of the item. Here's one of my many fern images I make from my back yard, done on corrugated paper.

Usually in cyanotypes the aim is for the background painted surface to be as smoothly covered as possible. This allows the rich blue color, caused by the sunlight, to stand out against the white of the shadow.

However, I get playful at times. One afternoon I decided to take squares of paper and paint them with random splotches. I wasn't aiming for a smooth covering of the surface. I had no intention of laying items onto the squares to cast shadows. Instead, the paint pattern itself was the object of the quest.

I let the paint drip. Splotch. Twist and turn. I held the paper at angles. When I was done, I had a collection of squares with an intriguing variety of shapes. Each created by the sun's light.

It then became a Rorschach test. I would rotate the squares around to see what I could see. This one looked like a sheep when held a certain way. Another one, a curious dog. Maybe that one was a soaring bird. Where most traditional cyanotypes clearly depict an object, it was fun to enjoy cyanotypes where they could be anything at all.

